GOVERNANCE FOR SUSTAINABILITY WORKSHOP

June 2- 4, 2002
Whistler, British Columbia

SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS

Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management

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Introduction

On June 2-4, 2002, the Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management hosted a workshop on "Governance for Sustainability". Leaders from governments, First Nations, the corporate sector and civil society from Canada and the United States came together to share experiences and promote leadership and innovation in governance for sustainability.

Governance for sustainability can be defined as the fundamental shift taking place across institutions – including government, civil society, academia and corporate entities – to encourage its constituents to behave in a sustainable manner. Examples include corporations that are pursuing sustainable development because it has a positive impact on the bottom line and share prices. Sustainability is also being pursued by governments to increase accountability, improve decision-making and provide long-term benefits to citizens.

While there are many different definitions of sustainability, most are based on some common principles or ideas including: integration of environmental, economic and social values; recognition of the needs of both present and future generations; transparency; accountability; efficient decision-making; science-based decision making; continuous improvement; innovation, and shared responsibility.

The workshop focused on one aspect of governance for sustainability: the role played by senior governments – provincial, state and federal agencies – in advancing sustainability, through the way in which they conduct their own business and in the ways they support the roles played by local governments, First Nations, civil society and the business sector.

Within this context, the workshop examined three major themes: decision support tools, accountability and institutional responses to sustainability.

1. **Decision Support Tools** are approaches, techniques and methods that decision-makers can use to ensure that the decisions they reach support sustainable outcomes. Decisions drive institutions forward and manifest the behaviour of the institution; they involve an assessment and integration of values, information and risks. The key issue explored was how data and knowledge can be integrated and applied to help senior governments make decisions that support sustainability.

   Key points made at the workshop included:

   - That decision tools need to build in commitment to implementation and tracking the results of decisions.
   - That social values in decision-making, not just science and economics, are important.

- That there is a need for pragmatism – a combination of realism overcoming pessimism.
- That sound decisions on complex issues such as BC's Central Coast, rural economic recovery, and the Kyoto Protocol take time to get right. Investment now pays off to make more timely and sustainable decisions later on.
- That it's important to understand business needs relating to sustainability before designing data warehouses.

2. **Accountability** involves setting performance measures, tracking results and publicly reporting on progress towards sustainability. It includes ensuring that decision-making processes are transparent and support public interests, and adapting these decisions when the desired results are not supported. Other aspects of accountability include independent sustainability appraisals, third party audits, certification, Sustainability Commissioners appointed by government and Progress Boards.

   Key points made during the workshop included:

   - The importance of ensuring accountability is part of the governance culture.
   - That the initial set of indicators from the BC Progress Board, while a good start, needs to be adjusted to meet the province's draft sustainability principles.
   - That indicators at the community level need to be encouraged.

3. **Institutional Response** – Traditional institutions often make decisions in "silos" created by programs that are dominated by hierarchical systems. New sustainable models take a more integrated approach to making decisions. In British Columbia, the Georgia Basin Ecosystem Initiative and the Fraser Basin Council are examples of innovative sustainability governance models. In both of these examples, multiple levels of government work with members of civil society to integrate their respective strengths to support better and more sustainable decisions. No single institution has a final say – all balance powers by a variety of institutions.

   During the workshop it was noted that:

   - Government structures have to adapt to changing challenges. For example, nine agencies were brought under one roof to create B.C.'s new Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management. While this has not been easy, it has resulted in some significant innovations.
   - There is a need for changes in all levels of governance, including universities and corporate structures.

The workshop discussions made it clear that the sustainability issues we confront require horizontal integration in all facets of our work, traditional models will not suffice. Silos that have traditionally existed within ministries, departments of universities, civic groups with special interests and the private sector have to be broken down.

The Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management plans to continue these discussions through our website (http://www.gov.bc.ca/srm/) and through future events such as the Fraser Basin Council's "Collaborative Leadership for Sustainability: State of the Fraser Basin Conference" to be held January 23-25, 2003 (http://www.fraserbasin.bc.ca/). Through both of these means we plan to explore practical examples of "governance for sustainability" in action so that we can better understand what is required to model, encourage and support sustainable decisions in all sectors of society. There was agreement in principle to convene a workshop in June 2003, led by the corporate sector, to review potential examples of sustainability. A Sustainability Principles paper will be circulated for comment to workshop participants in August.

What follows are highlights of the presentations made at the workshop with links to full presentations provided wherever possible.

I encourage you to explore our Sustainability website at: srmwww.gov.bc.ca/sustainability/ This site is currently under development and will be made live in the very near future

Sincerely,

Jon O'Riordan
Deputy Minster
Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management

Governance for Sustainability Workshop

Workshop Report

Sunday, June 2nd 2002

Welcome

Jon O'Riordan, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management

Delegates were welcomed and workshop sponsors (Georgia Basin Ecosystem Initiative, BC Hydro and New Society Publishers) were thanked.

Georgia Basin Ecosystem Initiative

Don Fast, Environment Canada

Regional Director General, Pacific and Yukon Region, Environment Canada, with overall responsibility for the Georgia Basin Ecosystem Initiative.

The Georgia Basin Ecosystem Initiative (GBEI) includes many of the elements considered important for sustainability. The GBEI is an opportunity for scientists and officials to work together, and involves many partnerships between government agencies, communities and First Nations. It also involves working across the border with the United States – "there is no magic firewall on the 49th parallel." Working across the border creates challenges, such as the integration of data that is collected differently, and concerns ranging from terrorist access to information to bilingualism.

This workshop is timely. The Georgia Basin Ecosystem Initiative is currently looking at its next phase, and this workshop will provide useful information. The workshop will provide input into the State of the Fraser Basin Conference to be held in January 2003, and a conference on research in the Georgia Basin-Puget Sound to be held in March 2003. It will also provide ideas for delegates to take to the Rio+10 conference in Johannesburg (September 2003).

Georgia Basin QUEST

John Robinson, Sustainable Development Research Institute

Professor, Sustainable Development Research Institute and Department of Geography, University of British Columbia

The QUEST project is about the process of to coming to agreement about the world we want to live in, through information, knowledge and dialogue. It is part of the five-year Georgia Basin Futures Project that is exploring pathways to sustainability.

Public understanding is one of the biggest barriers to sustainability. QUEST was set up as a game – similar to SimCity – into which real data is fed, making it possible for people to see the possible alternative outcomes of today's decisions. The final version will be available in September 2002, but a model has been available in places such as Science World and on the website. QUEST includes a variety of elements, such as a digital library, the 'GB Explorer' – a web-based method to find out about a particular region – as well as stories and perspectives from around the Basin.
To view John Robinson's PowerPoint show, click here.

For more information on GB-QUEST, visit http://www.basinfutures.net

Monday, June 3rd 2002

Welcome from the Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management

Jon O'Riordan, Deputy Minister

Jon O'Riordan welcomed delegates to the Governance for Sustainability workshop. The British Columbia government has outlined its intent to develop scientifically sound, principled approaches to sustainability for natural resource management, and has released its first draft of its Strategic Plan with three goals of sustainability:

- A prosperous economy
- A sound social infrastructure
- A sustainable environment and safe communities

The province is also committed a fourth goal of sound governance. This entails developing decisions that meet sustainability principles that are integrated, transparent and accountable. It means that decisions are taken with the long-term in mind, and based both on science and values. Structures of governance have to be broken down – silos that traditionally exist in ministries; in departments of universities; in civic societies with special interests and with the private sector seeking a social licence rather than only a single bottom line. The outcomes of decisions have to be measured and tracked, and lead to continuous improvement. None of these issues can be governed by traditional models: the big issues of the day require integrated, horizontal organisation decision-making models.

This workshop specifically invited representatives from all types of governance structures – governments, First Nations, civil society, corporations and the private sector. Delegates were encouraged to think about cross-sectoral strategies for reaching sound decisions on sustainability.

Keynote Presentation: The Role of Government in Governance for Sustainability

Langdon Marsh, National Policy Consensus Center

Fellow, National Policy Consensus Center, Oregon

The successful *Oregon Solutions* approach develops solutions to community-based problems through partnerships between government, business and non-profit organisations, led by a convenor. There are several examples of these projects, which are intended to simultaneously support economic, environmental and community objectives.

There is a need to "measure what matters", a term taken from the Northwest Environment Watch publication *This Place on Earth 2002*, which has tracked 'progress' on indicators such as population growth, the number of vehicles, returns of salmon runs and air quality. To measure what really matters, things like the status of the region's ecosystems and our satisfaction with life, requires better data and further research.

One of the major challenges faced in this region and elsewhere is how to solve real regional and local problems in a sustainable way. National, provincial and state governments have multiple tools at their disposal to help communities solve problems. These tools include economic and infrastructure development grants, technical assistance, regulatory actions, like environmental, health, transportation, and energy, social services and so on. What they often lack is a coordinated, problem targeted capacity to deliver these services in a way that leverages local efforts to solve one or more community based problems.

The Oregon Executive Order states that "The state of Oregon shall develop and promote policies and programs that will assist Oregon to meet a goal of sustainability within on generation—by 2025." Governor Kitzhaber adopted ten sustainable community objectives, ranging from diverse economic opportunities for all citizens, to youth supported by strong families and communities, to efficient compact development and to healthy watersheds. This has spawned the Oregon Solutions approach, and a focus on community governance.

There is a rich body of collaborative practice developed over the last 25 years to draw on and to enhance. New governance systems like Oregon Solutions provide a rich opportunity to merge this experience with community driven initiatives to solve local problems in a sustainable way.
Click here for a full copy of Langdon Marsh's presentation

Question and Comments

- *What are the key elements of success?*

  Focus on the stated objectives and written agreement, focus on the triple bottom line. Ensure that the convenor has sufficient 'clout' to perform their task. Bring senior governments in to focus on community problems and projects.

- *Gov. Kitzhaber has been critical of the failure of some organisations to deal with the worsening situation. How can more be done?*

  Governor has been keen supporter of need for change, but this is a hard message for many agencies.

- *Comment that the principles provided in background material and information from BC agencies does not sufficiently address ecological or social needs.*

- *Oregon Executive Order has clear environmental goals and targets. End goal is critical.*

  Governor believes that the 10 objectives are critical for success, and give the agencies "something to shoot for." Hope that this will be merged with the Oregon Benchmarks at some future point.

Perspectives Panel

The six panel members were asked to address the question: *What do governments need to do differently to facilitate, promote or encourage measurable progress towards sustainability in all sectors of society?*

Art Sterrit, First Nations perspective

Chief Negotiator, Gitgatt First Nation

Art spoke of his work to promote Ecosystem Based Management (EBM) in the Land and Resource Management Plans (LRMPs) for the central coast of BC. The First Nations of Turning Point on the Central Coast have been leading a multi-party process including industry, environmental groups and municipalities. Aboriginal rights and title are recognised as a foundation for this. The First Nations negotiated a general protocol with the government in 2001, with four areas for action:

- EBM (principles have been agreed to)
- Mitigation for industry impacted by land use plans
- Setting aside areas for protection
- Forestry, fishing and tourism – economic opportunities for First Nations

All components must be implemented for EBM to work. Pilot projects are underway to demonstrate how EBM works 'on the ground.'

The multi-party process is inexpensive, and benefits everyone. First Nations must be full participants. Talk is not enough – all facets of government must respond with policies that allow these processes to move forward. First Nations have a framework to make it work, but a 'low policy ceiling' (i.e. lack of flexibility in provincial policies) is blocking progress. We need new policy that reflects the new reality.

Tony Maas, Youth perspective

Student, Royal Roads University

Sustainability is everyone's issue, but we don't realise it yet. Input for this presentation came from Royal Roads students. When invited, out of approximately 150 undergraduate students in the Bachelor of Environmental Science and Bachelor of Commerce programs, there was a turn out of only 35 students.

Investing in our future – youth – is important. Many young people have lost faith in governments, demonstrated by the lack of ability even to implement the Kyoto Protocol. There is a need to look beyond the cost of today to the benefits for tomorrow.

Also, investing in sustainability education at all levels, from primary to university is important. By investing in education, government can provide tomorrow's decision makers with the knowledge they will need to respond to the many challenges that we are all destined to face if current levels of unsustainable economic development continue.
Click here for a full copy of Tony Maas' presentation

Cheeying Ho, Social perspective

Executive Director, Smart Growth BC

We need to "measure what matters." What we measure should guide how we make decisions; which should guide what we manage; which should guide how we "govern." Several indicators are being developed and used by others, such as the Alberta Genuine Progress Indicator (GPI),which accounts for a variety of social and quality of life factors. The ideal economic or GDP hero is a chain-smoking terminal cancer patient going through an expensive divorce whose car is totalled in a 20-car pileup. There is a gap between the GDP – which is rising – and the GPI – which remains steady or is declining slightly.

The provincial government should to include specific social objectives in its sustainability principles, and to balance social, environmental and economic objectives. There should be legislation to support these principles, and a commitment to them by every Ministry and government office. The government should provide incentives for local economic development, reduce the income gap, and support cultural development. There should be a commitment to public involvement, transparency in decision-making and opportunities for citizen engagement, so that sustainability is meaningful for everyone.
Click here for a copy of Cheeying Ho's PowerPoint presentation

Johnny Carline, Local government perspective

Chief Administrative Officer, Greater Vancouver Regional District

There is a need for integration of economic, environmental and social considerations within governments: the need to move from 'vertical silos' to 'horizontal slices.' The Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD) achieved this in part by creating integrated special purpose utility departments (e.g. planning, engineering, operations) to replace separate water, sewer, solid waste, etc. groups. This enabled them to replace conventional decision making with matrix or team management approaches. Johnny spoke of the dangers of single purpose agencies and the need to subordinate them to broader integrative bodies.

Sustainability is not just a long range planning activity, and should not get stuck at the 'visioning' level, as this will miss current and relevant opportunities. One needs to beware of using monitoring and research as a surrogate for action. Budget decisions must be integrated with outcome objectives – 5 and 10 year budget projections can become 5 and 10 year sustainability projections. Perhaps there should be Sustainability Plans instead of requirements for separate Plans for management of growth, liquid waste, solid waste, etc.

Talking about sustainability is critical, but be cautious about 'sustainability jargon' that traps sustainability in a narrow circle of converted professionals. Pragmatic opportunism is required to capitalize on the issues of the day to promote sustainability – such as the Olympic Bid, the Community Charter and even the Canucks.
Click here for a full copy of Johnny Carline's presentation

Linda Coady, Business perspective

Vice President, Environmental Enterprise, Weyerhaeuser Canada

Sustainability is a lot like teenage sex – more people are talking about than actually doing it, and when they do try it, they don't do it very well. Sustainability is a product of interactions and outcomes – often the answer turns out to be something that no one individual had thought about before they came together to seek a cooperative solution. The process of bringing people coming together may be referred to as a "scrum" – and it needs to be framed on basic principles, like a DNA code that develops the framework. The capacity of many businesses to be involved in sustainability is often limited, especially small and medium-sized businesses that are barely hanging in. The principles need to be a solid: both a 'pathway' and a 'life raft.'

The capacity of many businesses to be involved in sustainability is often limited, especially small and medium-sized businesses that are barely hanging in. And, not everyone is interested in sustainability. We need 'living, breathing' models up and running, and the concept needs to be demystified, becoming a fundamental issue like health care.

All parties have to be willing to give up some measure of control – this is especially hard for big government and big business. Sustainability requires authentic

communication and commitment. It is about the conditions under which growth can be a good thing – and it is an idea whose time has come.

David Boyd, Environmental perspective

Environmental lawyer, University of Victoria

A study of 51 indicators by the International Development Research Centre ranked Canada 93rd out of 180 nations on environmental performance. Other critical reports about Canada's environmental record have been published by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the Auditor General, the Commissioner for Environment and Sustainable Development, and the North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation. On the good news side, the World Economic Forum ranked Canada as fourth in terms of its potential for achieving sustainability. There had been some success, such as the Protected Areas Strategy, and public pressure through the World Wildlife Fund Endangered Spaces Campaign and international pressure over the use of non-old growth timber. However, Canada still lacks effective endangered species legislation (as does B.C.) as well as legally enforceable standards to ensure the safety of drinking water and clean air.

Economic priorities continue to dominate the agenda, while we are not recognising the limits of this earth. To be a leader, we have to beat the best. Currently, Sweden is the best in many ways. The Swedish government acknowledges that the earth has limits, and has 15 specific measures with goals and targets. They use economic policies such as carbon taxes and feebates for NO_2 emissions as incentives. Using the precautionary principle, Sweden has banned many pesticides that continue to be used in Canada today. They provide funding for communities as an incentive to find more sustainable solutions. Sweden is also providing aid to other countries to help them become more sustainable.

David challenged governments to: be honest, aim high, and provide less talk and more action.
Click here for a full copy of David Boyd's presentation

Questions and Comments

During the discussion period that followed, points made included:

- *To involve youth, we need less talk and more action, with a commitment to youth involvement in decision-making. Youth have a role to play in educating their peers and parents.*
- *Support for a Sustainability Act.*
- *Need for tools to make informed decisions, but mutual trust is essential. We need to look to the micro-level – e.g. communities.*
- *Need incentives – e.g. water is cheap, so we waste it. Look at tax-shifting. Need incentives for smaller stores as opposed to big-box construction.*
- *It can be hard to function horizontally especially at first. Need to build grass roots commitment to this idea, which will take strong commitment from the top.*

- *Macro organisation need to develop the capacity to work at a micro scale. Micro organisations – e.g. municipalities – have to figure out how to better link to the macro organisations.*
- *Need to "walk the walk." GVRD only allows staff to come to sustainability conferences when they have implemented 2-3 sustainability programs.*
- *What is unsustainable, and what are you doing about it?*

Other comments include the following:

- *Hard to continue with treaty negotiations without results. Need to move forward from a common set of principles.*
- *Continuing to learn about sustainability without actually implementing it. Need to take control and not wait for opportunities to present themselves.*
- *False belief that change towards sustainability could be driven by senior management alone. Need to empower and involve on-the-ground folks.*
- *BC coastal forest sector, economy and environment collapsing. Need to come to grips with global economic forces, provides opportunity for new approaches.*
- *Ivory tower universities have tremendous knowledge and ideas. Need for greater dialogue between academia, business and government.*
- *Matrix approach allows for input from many experts within and outside of organisation.*
- *Key characteristic of Sweden's success is leadership. Sweden's king is a proponent of The Natural Step. Environment needs to be a priority at the highest level of government.*
- *Problem in Canada is multiple levels of government. Also a problem that voters have to hold governments accountable, e.g. for Red Book promises.*
- *Canadians have waited for government action, but real action in business sector, ENGOs, local governments. Senior governments cannot deliver but they can set the rules that govern collective behaviour – e.g. changes to the building code has potential for enormous energy savings. Need to create more incentives.*

The Vancouver 2010 Olympic Bid: Putting Sustainability Principles into Practice

Ken Baker, Vancouver 2010 Bid Corporation

Executive Director, Environment and Sustainability, Vancouver 2010 Bid Corporation

The Vancouver 2010 bid for the 2010 Olympic Games is a 'work in progress.' The formal Vancouver 2010 submission will be submitted in January 2003 and the IOC will announce the host city in July 2003. The 2010 Games would create legacies, in terms of sport development, regional infrastructure – and hopefully, a new standard for sustainability. Undertaking the Games would be a huge venture, but the Vancouver-Whistler bid has many strengths, such as the history of successful major events.

The Olympic Movement has its own Agenda 21 that promotes improving socio-economic conditions, conservation and management of resources, and strengthening the role of major groups. The Lillehammer Games set its own Environmental

Guidelines, and the Vancouver 2010 Games would incorporate Sustainability Principles that recognise ecological limits, take a long term view of the results of decisions, and promote stakeholder engagement, equity and healthy communities. The Bid's Sustainability Policy will promote environmental stewardship, economic opportunities and social responsibility, as well as sport development and health promotion.

The Bid process creates many challenges, but also many opportunities such as the opportunity to showcase progress towards sustainability, and to advance people's awareness and understanding of sustainability practices.
Click here to view Ken Baker's PowerPoint presentation

Questions and Comments

- *Will you screen corporate sponsors to ensure they represent healthy and sustainable organisations?*

  The limelight of sponsorship can also be an opportunity to change corporate practices, as Greenpeace did with Coca-Cola in the Sydney Games by encouraging use of less harmful refrigeration technology. Don't know yet if there will be screening.

- *What have you done about security?*

  The Bid is preparing a security plan for Games participants including athletes and dignitaries. It is expected that the federal government will take the lead role in security during the 2010 Games.

- *If the focus is on showcasing sustainability, what has the Bid Corporation done about decisions such as the Lillooet Land Use Plan?*

  Bid will be presented in the context of Canada. Vancouver 2010 is aware of these issues, but cannot control provincial or federal government decisions. The Bid will focus on how the organising committee for the Games will deal with issues such as greenhouse gases, and use this as an opportunity to raise awareness of these issues.

Decision Support Tools

Don Fast, Environment Canada

Regional Director, General of Pacific and Yukon Region, Environment Canada

The Framework that Environment Canada is using to advance integrated decision making for sustainable development operates at two levels. At the Strategic level the framework will help to consider environment proposals through consideration of a sound "diagnostique" and approach. At the Priority Setting Level it will help to determine where and why to act, how to act and when to act.

The "Diagnostique" looks at the challenges: environment and human health, stewardship of the natural environment and climate and atmospheric change. The approach looks at science-based information, innovative tools to change behaviours, and partnerships at a local, national and global level.

For priority setting, there are guidelines that govern *where* and *why* the federal government should become involved in a process. If there is clearly a federal role, this will be considered in light of where the issue is in the risk management cycle and how the new strategic approach has been applied (*how*). And finally since it is not feasible or practical to launch and implement the government's entire environmental agenda at once, the framework provides some principles to guide the staging of initiatives (*when*).

This Framework will build on an integrated knowledge base, such as the Canadian Information System for the Environment – CISE. It will also rely on the right indicators to drive action, such as the indicators being developed by the National Round Table.
(**Note:** The PPT presentation is not available)

Bruce Freeland, Kitsap County, Washington State

Director of Planning, Department of Community Development, Kitsap County

Kitsap County includes 200 miles of saltwater coastline and numerous small and productive creeks that are very important salmon habitat. Kitsap County has been involved in the development of a Comprehensive Plan Study for the Chico Creek Watershed, in a way that brought science into a highly participatory public process.

The citizen group defined three alternative 50 year scenarios: development under the present plan, an alternative that allowed for more urban growth, and an alternative that stressed conservation. They then analysed the impacts of those alternatives on natural systems, using computer modelling and expert analysis. The tools used to get there were:

- Partnerships: with the federal and state governments, tribes, and local governments;
- Public Involvement: including open houses, workshops, direct mailings and outreach.
- Education: setting up a "Chico Watershed Academy" in which members had to commit to extensive educational programs.

GIS has also been an important tool, allowing the group to view a variety of information on the Chico watershed, such as geology, land use, trees, and the impacts e.g. of roads using various scenarios.

For a virtual tour of the Chico Creek watershed, go to
http://www.kitsapgov.com/nr/chico.htm

Click here to view Bruce Freeland's PowerPoint presentation

Small Group Discussions

Delegates were divided into small groups and asked to discuss three questions:

- *Are there other types of decision support tool not considered in the background papers or by speakers?*

- *What are the elements of a successful decision support tool?*
- *How can we improve decision support tools? Are there needs that available decision support tools are not currently meeting? Is there a tool that hasn't been invented yet?*

Input from the groups' discussions included:

Tools not considered:
Important to clarify objective, context (legal, cultural, socio-economic, motivation), principles and criteria before selecting tools

- *Modeling Tools, e.g. integrated data systems*
- *Goal building system (look at what it is you want to do and impose that on reality)*
- *Strategic Environmental Assessments*
- *Social marketing*
- *Community/ multi-stakeholder/ public involvement processes*
- *Environmental Scans*
- *Qualitative Analysis*
- *Risk Analysis*
- *Empirical models*
- *Surveys, that include qualitative and value-based data*
- *Multiple Accounts Analysis*
- *Charrettes*
- *3D Mapping*
- *Negotiation*
- *Best practices, lessons from other jurisdictions*
- *Technical/ Scientific approach*
- *Indicators*
- *Education*

Elements of Successful Tool:
- *Appropriate, useful*
- *Consensus based process, clearly defined decision makers and stakeholders*
- *Science/ information based AND value based*
- *Timely*
- *Measurable*
- *Clear defined problem and objectives*
- *Easy to communicate, credible*
- *Clear and easily understood, transparent accountable*
- *Flexible*
- *Supported by management, staff and public*

Improvements:
- *Maybe the tools are good enough, but the users lack the wisdom. Are we asking the right questions?*
- *Selection of appropriate tool*
- *Shared goal setting and implementation*
- *Easier-to-use tools with better training*
- *Seek continuous improvement*
- *Better problem identification and goal setting*
- *Use of accessible, integrated information*
- *Better decision process – transparent, inclusive, consensus based, focus on lessons learned, with management support, timely*
- *Management of risk and uncertainty*

The tool that hasn't been invented yet:

- Artificial intelligence tool: real-time computer analysis of data relationships

- GIS that works for colour blind people!

- "Dial in" decision making

- Virtual reality tool: provides full experience of what the future would be like based on different decisions

- Tool that indicates our proximity to a threshold and alarms us accordingly

- Charrettes for sustainability decisions

- Visual stimulation tools – pictures, music, interactive programs like Quest or Sim City and Sim World, which take us beyond just technical data, engage the right brain, provide deep and understandable learning experiences.

For a copy of more detailed notes from the small discussion groups, click here.

The Honourable Stan Hagen, Minister of Sustainable Resource Management

The government of British Columbia is commitment to sustainability, which is considered central to efforts to renew the province's economy. The government's Strategic Plan has four goals: a strong and vibrant economy; a supportive social infrastructure and safe, healthy communities; a sustainable environment; and a fourth goal of sound governance to help integrate and balance the other three goals. The Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management was established to provide leadership, find new ways of delivering land use planning, and building new partnerships with industry, communities, First Nations, academia and interest groups.

The government has announced 10 principles to assist with governance for sustainability for the province. These provide a basic framework for decision-making, and will be tested through key policies such as the Working Forest discussion paper and Land and Resource Management Plans. The work on the Central Coast is one example of putting this vision to work: optimising development of natural resources while protecting ecosystem integrity. The government will be consulting on the sustainability principles over the coming months. The discussions at this workshop will provide important input into the development of the draft principles and the supporting discussion paper.
Click here for a full copy of Minister Hagen's presentation

Questions and Comments

- *Some communities are losing hospitals and schools, as well as being hard-hit by declining resource economies. How can we sustain these communities so that they are they when resource opportunities turn around?*

  These are difficult economic times and governments have to make tough decisions. There has been an increase in the health care budget, and we need to do things differently.

- *The principles look good on paper but it is hard to reconcile them with actions to date. A principle is 'innovation,' but we have lost the Green Economy Secretariat. A principle is 'accountability', but the Environmental Auditor has been repealed. We have lost 'transparency' with the new*

Environmental Assessment Act, and the government is back-peddling from the 'science based' Kyoto Protocol.

There are two Ministers representing BC with discussions on the federal government's proposed ratification of the Kyoto Protocol – BC has questions, for example on cost, that are important to ask. The government has gone through a core review process that looked carefully at what is best done by whom. Government organisations tend to be least willing to change, the private sector is more adaptable. They have maintained core services.

- *Concern for sustainability is not yet evident in the new Forest Practices Code and similar documents. On the positive side, the Turning Point Ecosystem Based Management approach is heartening – are there others like it?*

  Yes, government is looking for new and better ways of doing things. Similar approaches are being developed elsewhere, for example in Muskwa-Kechika.

Tuesday, June 4th 2002

Jon O'Riordan, Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management

Workshop host Jon O'Riordan introduced the second day of the workshop by noting that he had seen a strong sense of energy and commitment to the goals of the workshop. People are learning from each other and tweaking their personal and professional views on sustainability, and, judging from the examples that we heard on the first day, there is probably more progress towards sustainability than we care to admit.

This workshop is not intended to be a one-off conference. Rather, the vision is one of continuous learning from this network. Delegates should think about ways to maintain the dynamic, for example through the Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management website.

Accountability

Stuart Smith, Chair, National Roundtable on the Environment and the Economy

One needs to choose real goals, and then not worry unduly about the words (such as the definition of sustainability!). 'Sustainability' is simply a concern for inter-generational equity – leaving things for the next generation at least as good as it is for us. Goals should be set by the stakeholders themselves, and expressed in clear and measurable terms.

The National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy (NRTEE) is developing national indicators that account mainly for natural capital (environment) and somewhat for human/social capital. The problem with measuring the environment is that it is hard to know when you are close to a threshold – will cutting a single tree really make a difference? Also, when losing natural capital you could be gaining human capital. Indicators must be clear, transparent and lead to action – it is hard to make sense of 50 or more indicators weighted into a single index.

NRTEE indicators will include measures of air and water quality, forest cover and near-urban wetlands, as well as agricultural land, non-renewable resources and education. These are national indicators – at a local level the indicators chosen may be very different. British Columbia should consider province-wide reporting on a few general indicators, and encouraging communities to conduct their own local level reporting on legacy issues of their own choosing.
Click here to view Stuart Smith's PowerPoint presentation

Brenda Eaton, Office of the Premier

Deputy Minister to the Premier of British Columbia, Corporate Planning and Restructuring

The government is both a follower and a leader in sustainability – large corporations, non-government organisations and communities are already leading by example, driven by international pressures. Public interest is in more than just a strong economy and social services, there is increased recognition for the need to have all three legs of the sustainability stool. The Premier's interest in sustainability is demonstrated by the creation of the Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management, the Strategic Plan and the release of the sustainability principles.

It is tough to do performance measures because the issue is so all-encompassing that it is hard to get started. Also, we do not always have control over the inputs – and organisations are reluctant to measure what they cannot control. Some of the factors are too hard to count, it is hard to make them meaningful. And, we need to measure over the long term, something hard to do in a political framework. However, the three-year strategic plan is a good start.

To move from 'platitudes to action' we must pick some goals, with clear measures, and get started. It will be imperfect but we need to get on with it. This needs to be a very public process. The BC Progress Board is acting as an external advisor and auditor. We need to bring ideas and processes to Cabinet in a way that they can act on them – a handful of leaders will make a difference.

Small Group Discussions

Delegates were divided into small groups and asked to discuss three questions:

- *Are there other types of accountability mechanism not considered in the background papers or by speakers?*
- *What are the elements of a successful accountability mechanism?*
- *How can we improve accountability mechanisms? What are the pros and cons of internal accountability (i.e. a government measuring its own progress) versus external accountability (reporting by third parties)? Are there needs that available accountability mechanisms are not currently meeting? Is there a tool that hasn't been invented yet?*

Input from the groups' discussions included:

Tools not considered:

- *Certification*
- *Balanced score card*
- *Benchmarks - how does your jurisdiction compare to others?*
- *Adaptive management*
- *Life cycle value analysis: Cradle to grave evaluation of all inputs to project*
- *Greater accountability – transparent, 3rd party*
- *Sustainability reports*
- *Mechanisms for personal accountability*
- *Use of personal and government challenges to generate actions.*
- *Rate of change measures*

Performance agreements

- *Program evaluations*

- *Results based evaluation vs. process based (e.g. audits)*
- *Legal/ political system (Environmental Bill of Rights, tribunals, ethics commissioner)*

Elements of a successful accountability mechanism:

- *Clear goals and objectives*
- *Practical*
- *Trusted, credible and supported*
- *Measurable*
- *Relevant to the individual.*
- *Include social and qualitative data*
- *Lead to action*
- *Affordable*
- *Comparable across jurisdictions, across time*
- *There is capacity to do the job*
- *Relevant*
- *Valid*
- *Realistic time frame*
- *Appropriate scale*
- *Adaptable*
- *Collaborative and inclusive*
- *Provides incentives and feedback*
- *Simple*
- *SMART – simple, measurable, acceptable/ achievable, realistic/ relevant, timely*

Improvements:

- *Better indicators*
- *Incentives for business and others*
- *Governments to act as facilitators for change*
- *Develop a long-term vision for a more sustainable society*
- *Ensure uniformity of measures*
- *Improve methodology to ensure constituents are engaged*
- *Better communication, use indicators/ accountability as a communication tool*
- *Real-time measurement of progress, e.g. real-time tracking of community/ province/ national ecological footprint*
- *Legislative requirement to report on sustainability*
- *Monitoring committee – not independent, but arm's length, working collaboratively internally*
- *Clear targets, responsibility, clear authority*
- *Improve data collection, credibility of data*
- *Encourage dialogue (e.g. conferences) and enhance community capacity*
- *Establish credibility and trust in government*
- *'Peer' review of progress by experts*
- *Accounting system that looks at top 3-5 goals/ objectives*
- *Specify target dates (timelines) and content for reporting on accountability*
- *New auditing relationship, independent but collaborative – monitor collaboratively, report independently*
- *Recognise need to adapt to rapid change, provide capacity to change*
- *Pressure to deliver*

Pros and cons of internal accountability versus external accountability

- Degree to which pros and cons matter depend on transparency
- If governments method was transparent shouldn't matter

Pro's of 3rd party or external accountability

- Third party certification as a form of external accountability is useful in situations where a diversity of perspectives must be embraced (as BC Central Coast) or where there is a lack of trust in government, or in the traditional mechanisms of solution.
- Everyone should be able to access and analyze data therefore government or organization can't fudge it too much
- How credible is that data to begin with, how was it collected – may be should be 3rd party to reduce/eliminate bias
- Credible
- Creates continuity, longer term, survives changes in government
- Ideally, targets will collaboratively set between government and auditors

Con's of 3rd party or external accountability

- Where third party certification is used, the standard-setting process must be credible and consistent - not easy to achieve this.
- How is 3rd party held accountable?
- Vulnerable to political influence
- Reporting must be timely
- 3rd party may take longer than internal auditing

The tool that hasn't been invented yet:

- *Interactive engagement of constituencies into whole process*
- *A 'clock' like the 'debt clock' that monitors progress towards sustainability*
- *Consumption patterns*
- *Use competition to create drive: a sustainability Olympics between different cities*
- *As part of the requirements for graduation, requiring students to do a household ecological footprint analysis*
- *A perfect aggregated indicator that accounts for everything!*
- *Ecological footprint*
- *A framework that focuses on the individual citizen and reorganises good and bad actions*

For a copy of more detailed notes from the small discussion groups, click here.

Responding to the Challenges

Barbara Lither, US Environmental Protection Agency

Senior Policy Advisor, US EPA Region 10

The new EPA Innovation Strategy document is very much based on sustainability although the term is not used. A limited number of copies of the document were provided for the delegates.

In the US, a statement of unity, the Federal Network for Sustainability, has been signed by senior representatives of 12 different federal agencies. The US Government is the world's largest consumer, and the goal is to use this purchasing power to encourage more sustainable choices. There are four initiatives – converting six federal agency offices to 100% post-consumer, chlorine-free paper; buying 'greener' electronic equipment and disposing used electronics properly; buying power from cleaner, 'greener' sources; and setting up Environmental Management Systems (EMS) to support Executive Orders, provide education and training, and promote EMS elsewhere. One example of an EMS in operation is with NASA, where goats are being used to 'mow the lawn', and the use of herbicides and pesticides has been greatly reduced.

The US Army is a leader in developing sustainability programs. They have set up an Installation Sustainability Program (that will eventually include all bases), which has created design standards for buildings, and set a 25 year goal for zero discharge of toxic materials. We should look for champions where we might not expect to find them, and to recognise that the public expects leadership from government

Click here to view Barbara Lither's PowerPoint presentation

Jack Blaney, Chair, Fraser Basin Council

Jack Blaney's message for governance for sustainability was simple:

Model It: Governments rarely model sustainability, but this is important if you expect this from others.

Reward It: People do what they get rewarded for doing (and monetary awards are the least effective)

Encourage It: Engage everybody in sustainability, for example through coalition leadership.

The government should set up a task force for each of these topics that result in simple but courageous actions.

We must govern for sustainability, and recognise that many of our problems are global in nature. Air quality is the biggest issue in Canada, and 35% of our air comes from China. Industry and the public are ahead of the government on sustainability – we are all looking for intergenerational equity and we must all work to the same ends. Jack suggested a Sustainability Bill of Rights, owned by a credible third party auditor.

Leaders have character, set direction, and get results. Government needs to redefine leadership as a shared responsibility and process. The Fraser Basin Council is an example of this – working with local governments and First Nations to strengthen communities through sustainability.

Small Group Discussions

Delegates were divided into small groups and asked to discuss three questions:

- *Are there other types of responses not considered in the background papers or by speakers?*
- *What are the elements of a successful institutional response?*
- *How can we improve institutional responses? Are there needs that available response mechanisms are not currently meeting? Is there a tool that hasn't been invented yet?*

Types of responses not considered:

- *Role of educational institutions*
- *Corporate restructuring*
- *More transparent/ accountable decision making*
- *Community ecosystem trusts: e.g. Columbia Basin Trust, Fraser Basin Council*
- *Shared decision-making, e.g. Youth advisory committee, First Nations advisory committee*
- *Role of media*
- *Stewardship councils*
- *Changing socially acceptable behaviours*
- *Role of business: incentives, examples, legislation*
- *Governments modeling their own behaviour, supported by public commitment from senior government (e.g. Executive Order)*

Elements of successful institutional responses:

- *Relevant to the public*
- *Promote discussion beyond political boundaries (bureaucrats without borders)*
- *Set the standard for behaviour*
- *Commitment – demonstrated through behaviour*
- *Responsive*
- *Ability to be open to other (responsive) interests and perspectives*
- *Make a different within the bureaucracy*
- *Be 'real', consistent, credible (walk the walk)*
- *Adaptive management*
- *Leadership credibility*
- *Transparent*
- *Provide government direction and leadership*

Improvements:

- *Identify barriers to sustainability and tackle them*
- *Build capacity*
- *Set targets and standards*
- *Train senior staff in interest-based negotiation – then they function better in multi-party negotiations*
- *Focus on partnerships – longevity of process*
- *Take an entrepreneurial approach to governance*
- *Fast track companies that have established good track records*
- *Shift from 'how to produce more' to 'produce with less by designing in sustainability'*
- *Ensure people work together*
- *Need incentives to reduce consumption*
- *Show Government leadership*
- *Flattening information line - make more accessible to everyone, e.g. GIS data available on web, within government*
- *Negotiate trade-offs, win/ wins, cooperative achievement of synergies*
- *Ecological tax reform and full cost accounting must be applied*
- *Prove potential sustainable solutions with pilot scale studies/ projects*
- *Reward risk taking and experimenting*

Tool that hasn't been invented yet:

- *Public service announcements, TV spots in support of green products*
- *Marketing for those who are "envirosmart"*
- *Adaptive legislation that is responsive to conditions, performance based*
- *The Entrepreneurial Approach to governance:*
- *One governance body for overall sustainable responsibility – that can speak for all - a single window approach.*

For a copy of more detailed notes from the small discussion groups, click here.

Whistler and The Natural Step

Hugh O'Reilly, Mayor, Resort Municipality of Whistler

The tourism is an industry that is not 'soft on the land', but in Whistler it relies heavily on a pristine natural environment and there is a need to protect this. Whistler has been developing a Strategic Plan, *Whistler 2002: Charting a Course for the Future* that was recently given a Sustainability Award by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. Its intent is to provide a seamless approach by the three major players: the municipality, Tourism Whistler and the Mountains.

As the Whistler Environmental Strategy was a high level document, it was hard to engage the community. A presentation by Dr. Karl-Henrik Robert, founder of The Natural Step (TNS), provided a common sense approach that could be easily communicated. The Resort Municipality of Whistler launched a group of "Early Adopters." They put themselves through this first, did an audit, and then began a community launch. Outreach has included household/school toolkits, a multi-media show and a speaker series. They are trying to combine recreation and education – encouraging people to ski and come to a presentation, for example.

Whistler is now developing a comprehensive sustainability plan, looking at the characteristics of a successful resort, developing alternate scenarios and evaluating these scenarios. Information from this process will also be used to update the Official Community Plan.

Click here to view Hugh O'Reilly's PowerPoint presentation

Questions and Comments

- *How will Whistler bring sustainability and TNS to the Olympic Bid? Does it have capacity (e.g. with water/ sewer infrastructure?) What influence is this having on Vancouver?*

  Whistler wants to set a new standard for sustainability with this Games, yet deal with the fear that sustainability means missing all the fun things in life. If the Bid is successful, there is a design for an infrastructure upgrade. Vancouver has now created a sustainability office (influenced by Whistler) as part of the Olympic Bid.

- *What plans are there for economic diversification over the long term?*

  Whistler has deliberately avoided diversification (e.g. turning down the private university), looking instead to its core businesses in the belief that this is a product that will survive in the long term.

- *What is Whistler's position on development in adjacent areas?*

  In limiting Whistler's growth, they want to look at where services are best delivered. Does Whistler need a large dry cleaner or can that best be provided in Squamish or Pemberton? Success is Whistler's biggest single challenge – if they grow too much, they will change the nature of the community that makes it so attractive in the first place.

Workshop Summary and Wrap-up Comments

Jon O'Riordan thanked the workshop sponsors and organisers, and summarised the results of the workshop:

On decision support tools,:

- The need to ensure that decision tools build in commitment to implementation and tracking the results of decisions.
- The importance of social values in decision-making, not just science and economics.
- A need for pragmatism – a combination of realism overcoming pessimism that sound decisions on complex issues such as the Central Coast, rural economic recovery, and Kyoto take time to get right. Investment now pays off to make more timely and sustainable decisions later on.
- The importance of understanding business needs relating to sustainability before designing data warehouses.

On accountability:

- Accountability is part of the governance culture of this government
- There is a recognition that the initial set of indicators from the BC Progress Board needs to be broadened. These are not perfect, but they are a start.
- Likes the concept of sustainability indicators at the community level and they should be encouraged

On governance:

- Government structures have to adapt to changing challenges. Bringing nine agencies into the new Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management has not been easy, but already there have been some innovations as a result.
- There is a need for changes in all levels of governance, including universities and corporate structures.

Jon concluded by reiterating the need for ongoing dialogue, and noted that some industry representatives had expressed an interest in hosting a future session. There is a need for many more examples of sustainability in action that will provide best management practices for us all. He applauded Jack Blaney's idea of Task Forces. Finally, he encouraged delegates to review and comment on material on the Ministry website, including the discussion paper expanding on the sustainability principles, which will incorporate many of the ideas from this workshop.

This workshop will also act as a lead into the State of the Fraser Basin Conference in January 2003. For more information, go to http://www.fraserbasin.bc.ca